

Wandering in the Wilderness

THE WILDERNESS ACT of 1964 set forth an ideal that would come to define much of the National Wilderness Preservation System that you can visit today. Wilderness is a place for personal challenge or relaxation, through primitive and unconfined recreation such as hiking, climbing, horseback riding, hunting, fishing, or just being in nature. Wilderness areas also serve as vast storehouses of ecological, geological, and historical resources, allowing us to learn about the world as it was and how it is changing today. Howard Zahniser, author of the Wilderness Act, perhaps captured it best when he wrote: “For the wilderness is essential to us, as human beings, for a true understanding of ourselves, our culture, our own natures, our place in nature.”

Here in the North Cascades, large tracts of Wilderness are managed by the Park and Forest Service. The Stephen Mather Wilderness comprises 93 percent of North Cascades National Park Service Complex. Forest Service lands to the west include the Mt. Baker and Noisy-Diobsud Wilderness areas; to the east the Pasayten Wilderness; and to the south and east the Lake Chelan-Sawtooth and Glacier Peak Wilderness areas.

Wilderness areas are national and international treasures set aside by Congress for the use and enjoyment of the American people in such a manner as will leave them unimpaired for future use and enjoyment as wilderness. Each of us plays a role in the preservation of these lands. When you are visiting the Wilderness, please help minimize impacts and protect this unique legacy. Pick up a *Wilderness Trip Planner* at any ranger station or visit www.wilderness.net



Climbers on Eldorado Peak.

©Erin McKay

Climbing in the North Cascades

THE PROMINENT VOLCANIC cone of Mt. Baker, northernmost of the Cascade volcanoes, attracts thousands of climbers who each year attempt the 10,781-foot summit. The peak offers a variety of approaches and varying degrees of technical difficulty. All routes enter the Mt. Baker Wilderness where National Forest Wilderness regulations apply. The two most popular routes are via the Coleman or the Easton Glaciers. The climb is physically challenging and the routes require technical skills and good fitness.

Mt. Baker is just one of a multitude of rewarding climbs located throughout both the National Park and National Forest. Climbers should be experienced in glacier travel and proficient at route finding and crevasse rescue before attempting a summit in the North Cascades. As the season progresses, routes become more difficult because open crevasses make route finding more challenging. Generally, the best climbing conditions are from May to July.

It is important to make a plan and stick to it when venturing into the mountains. Let others know your plan and fill out a Voluntary Climbing Register at the closest ranger station.

Human waste is one of the most significant concerns while climbing because there is no soil in which to bury it and it can contaminate drinking sources. Some climbing areas have toilets, but in many areas climbers must pack out waste. Never bury waste in snow or toss in a crevasse—it melts out quickly, contaminates drinking water and is a serious eyesore for all climbers on the route.

Climbers should also be careful when traversing sub-alpine areas. Vegetation at this elevation is particularly fragile and susceptible to human disturbance. These plants have short, often harsh growing seasons. Walking, sitting, or camping on the vegetation can easily cause significant damage. Please travel, rest, and camp on trails or in designated sites or on durable surfaces such as snow, rock, or bare ground.

Consult one of the many climbing guide books for detailed route information. A list of licensed climbing guides and outfitters can be obtained from any ranger station or the National Park or Forest Service websites. Pick up a copy of the National Park Service *Climbing Notes* newsletter to learn more about issues relevant to the climbing community. Check weather conditions beforehand at a ranger station or online.

National Park Service www.nps.gov/noca U.S. Forest Service www.fs.fed.us/r6/mbs

Newhalem

The Edge of Wilderness

THE NORTH CASCADES were still remote and wild in the 1910s, when the power of the Skagit River was first being harnessed. Newhalem was built as a company town for the men who worked at the dams and their families.

Learn about the area’s natural and cultural history by exploring interactive exhibits, watching theater presentations or talking with rangers at the North Cascades National Park Visitor Center. The interpretive staff at the Center present a wide variety of programs including evening programs at both the Colonial Creek and Newhalem Creek campgrounds.

North Cascades National Park Visitor Center
Open daily mid-April through October
Open Saturday & Sunday, November to April
Daily Ranger Programs: June 26 to September 3

Skagit Ranger Program Schedule									
PROGRAM	LOCATION	TIME	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Evening Program	Colonial Creek Campground	9:00pm*	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Evening Program	Newhalem Creek Campground	9:00pm*						●	●
Trail of the Cedars Walk	Skagit Tours Information Center	3:15pm	●					●	●
Junior Ranger Program	Colonial Creek Campground Amphitheater	10:00am							●
Thunder Knob Hike	Colonial Creek Campground Kiosk	2:00pm							●
River Loop Hike	National Park Visitor Center	10:00am	●						
Exploration Tables	National Park Visitor Center	10:00am	●	●	●	●	●	●	●
Ranger at the Lake	Diablo Lake Overlook	2:00pm	●	●	●	●	●	●	●

*Check bulletin boards or at the National Park Visitor Center as times may change